

RESTORATION UNSCRIPTURAL

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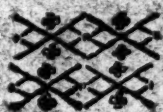
LETTER

TO A

FRIEND.

BY

JOHN HOLLOWAY.



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P R E F A C E.

THE following Letter is published with a sincere view to prevent the spread of the unscriptural doctrine of the Restoration. The Author means not to make any reply, should an answer appear against him: he has read almost every thing that has appeared upon the subject; and is perfectly content in discharging his conscience, let the consequences be what they may.

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F R I E N D.

DEAR SIR,

AGREEABLE to your request, and the solicitation of others, I shall venture to give you a few reasons that have induced me to consider as unscriptural the doctrine of the Restoration of all things. I shall be very brief; humbly praying the Holy Spirit to convey instruction to every mind.

The patrons of this doctrine have three sources of argument to support their hypothesis—Benevolence—Reason—Scripture.

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The first source of arguments is calculated to arrest the attention of the humane.

The second, the lukewarm professor and the man of the world.

The third, those who profess a veneration for the sacred pages.

Thus alternately every description of men are addressed. Is it to be wondered at, that among every class some should be found to support the tenet?

Arguments from BENEVOLENCE.

“Would you, with the small spark of affection that you possess, doom one of your children to inextinguishable fire for the errors and follies of a moment? And can ye suppose that God, who is the Father of the human race, possesses less philanthropy than yourself?” &c. &c.

Answer.—Apply the argument.

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I possess a small spark of affection—God is an ocean of love.

I see my child dreadfully convulsed—my parental feelings are kindled—the dear little infant is writhing its tender body in all the agony of distress.

What are my wishes, who have but a spark of love, in comparison to God, who is love itself?—yet he sees the child suffer—and die.

Again—My ears are assailed with the dreadful shrieks of a family immersed in the raging flame—where are my feelings?—How much more exquisite must be his, who knows our tender frame?—I would, had I power, rescue the miserable objects from their dreadful fate—but Infinite Wisdom interferes not.

But what is all this to the torments of hell? Apply then the principle of benevolence again—

Your son has been guilty, you say, of youthful follies—he dies without repentance—
you

you are permitted to look into the caverns of despair—you see your son lifting up his eyes in torments—you hear his doleful shrieks—he weeps—he groans—he gnashes with his teeth.

You possess a spark of affection—What are your wishes?—That your child may be delivered from that place of torment.

According to your benevolent views, forty-nine * years will be infinitely too long, much less a duration, to which the Scriptures put no bounds.

If you cannot bear to see your child suffer for a few years only, your heavenly Father, so much exceeding you in love, cannot bear it a single moment.

Arguments drawn from REASON.

“ All human governments punish for the purposes of correction ; and if driven to the

* The term appointed by some Restorationists.

neces-

necessity of sacrificing the life of the criminal, as merciful a method as possible is made use of, except in particular cases.—Is it possible that the government of God should be more unmerciful than that of man?" &c. &c.

Answer.—Every argument that arises from this source may be compared to a corrupted fountain, the streams of which must necessarily partake of its nature.

Apply human reason to the ways of God.

Does human reason approve of the procedure of God in permitting millions of the human race to be made wretched for the crime of one person?—Does human reason approve of the sovereignty of God in the destruction of the old world—indiscriminately involving in one common ruin the sucking child, as well as the hoary head?—Or that any should be put to death for picking up a stick?—Or that the land of Canaan should be ensanguined with the blood of infants?—Or the worship of one God should be confined to the Israelites?—No.—Human reason

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revolts—Had it been consulted, these things would not have happened—A greater equality would have been among mankind—Virtue would not have been oppressed—Vice would not have reigned triumphant—In fact, the fall would not have happened—Jesus would not have died !!!

Human reason denies the fall as to its effects—denies the atonement—the divinity of Christ—the influences of the Holy Spirit—the work of regeneration—the authenticity of Revelation—Providence—the being of God.—For human reason has led its votaries to all these extremes.

Benevolence and Reason united, and what a happy world would have been made !—How wise and well arranged every design !—How well executed every plan !—How vigilant !—How merciful !—How would you have surpassed Infinite Wisdom !

Thus Benevolence and Reason prove themselves incompetent tribunals to judge of present or future punishments, or any of the Divine proceedings.

Argu-

Arguments drawn from SCRIPTURE.

1. From the promises.
2. From a few equivocal terms.

The disciple of Jesus is in danger here. Whenever an appeal is made to the law and to the testimony, his attention is fixed.

All the promises that speak of the destruction of Satan's kingdom—the banishment of pain—the New Jerusalem, where tears are wiped from every eye—are pressed into the service of this doctrine.

I should find it the easiest task to prove that these promises refer either to the time of the Millenium, when Christ will dwell in the hearts of all during the thousand years confinement of Satan; or to the final state of those who are redeemed out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. In those happy regions of immortality and

peace, the usurpation of Satan shall be over, and nothing ever more disturb the happy inhabitant.

But as Scripture has absolutely fixed the state of good and bad spirits, human or angelic, it is sufficient, therefore, for me to present you with a few passages that are express upon this article.

Psal. ix. 17. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Psal. xi. 6. "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup." Isa. xxxiii. 14. "The finners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surpris'd the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Mal. iv. 1. "For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall

shall leave them neither root nor branch."

Matth. iii. 12. "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Chap. vii. 13. "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." Chap.

viii. 12. "But the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Chap. x. 28. "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Chap. xiii.

38 to 43. "The field is the world: the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered, and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend,
fend,

send, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Chap. xviii. 8, 9. "Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire." Chap. xxii. 13. "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Chap. xxiii. 33. "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Chap. xxv. 41. 46. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Mark iii. 29. "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness,

forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." Chap. ix. 43 to 48. "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Chap. xvi. 16. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Luke iii. 17. "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable." Chap. xiii. 3. 5. "I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. I tell you, Nay; but except

except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." John v. 29. " And shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Acts iii. 23. " And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." Rom. ii. 12. " As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law." Chap. ix. 22. " What if God willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" 1 Cor. i. 18. " For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness." Phillip. iii. 19. " Whose end is destruction." 2 Theff. i. 7 to 9. " And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels; in flaming fire; taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Chap. ii. 8 to 12. " And then

then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 1 Tim. vi. 9. "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." James iv. 12. "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who art thou that judgest another?" 2 Pet. ii. 1. 3, 4. 17. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them; and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And through covetousness

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ousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you : whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment—These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest ; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.” Chap. iii. 7. “ But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.” Jude, 6, 7. 13. “ And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. These are wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.” Rev. xiv. 10, 11. “ The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath

wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." Chap.

xix. 20. "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image: these both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Chap. xx. 10 to 15.

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of

life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Chap. xxi. 8. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death."

These are the chief texts that refer to the punishment of the wicked.—I will trust the whole cause to this single issue—if either of them, directly or indirectly, speak of punishment as a mean for restoration—or hell as a purgatory to prepare souls for heaven.

It is also remarkable, that when the rich man applies to the mercy of Abraham, he has no idea of a release; he only prays for mitigation; and Abraham, with all the seraphic feelings

feelings of heaven, does not afford him the least ground to hope for any change. Would it not have been merciful?—And, say ye who appeal to Benevolence and Reason, would you not have out-done Abraham in love, and whispered to Dives the great secret, that God would finally release him from that place of torment?

Permit me to say, that if the Scriptures already quoted do not convince the man that has embraced these tenets, he would not be persuaded though one arose from the dead.

If the doctrine of the Restoration were true, the termination of torments, their destination, &c. should have been expressed, and cautions given to prevent persons from mistaking upon so essential an article of the Christian faith.

In plain terms, the Scriptures should have expressed that the damned would be restored—that the devil and his angels would be again received into favour.

On the contrary, there is not a gleam of hope that beams upon the sinner dying without repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

Every

Every argument brought to support the doctrine of the Restoration, directly or indirectly contradicts the Scriptures, and charges our Saviour with improper language, and attributes cruelty to the Divine Being.

It was reserved for this age to accommodate Scripture to the carnal heart—to harmonise the plan of Eternal Wisdom—and turn apologists for our blessed Lord.

It has been found too unfashionable for the present day to imagine our Saviour's language could have been so harsh and dissonant—his conclusions so severe—his imagery so terrific. Every artifice is therefore made use of to add to the sense of some passages, and to diminish the sense of others.

With respect to the equivocal terms made use of to express the perpetuity of torments, it may be observed, that if the terms are uncertain, they are not to be explained; so that no inference can be drawn from them to support limited punishments. Our Saviour spake in a language that was sufficiently copious to have found him expressions that would have applied to limited punishments: the term

LIMITED

LIMITED itself would have answered every purpose. On the contrary, he uses the same term to express the duration of the happiness of the righteous, as he uses to express the punishment of the damned.

But there is no necessity to go upon the subject any farther.—I do not write to any who graft fables of their own upon the inspired writings.—I write to such as believe the Bible to be the word of God; to which they are forbid to add, and from which they are forbid to take away.

C O N C L U S I O N.

I WOULD earnestly entreat all who may peruse these few pages, to read the Bible for themselves; and that with fervent intercession to the Holy Spirit, that he would be pleased to lead them into all truth.

If a man be in the habit of sin—if he pays no attention to family devotion—if he be not frequently in his closet—If, in a word, he cannot say, “Lord, thou knowest all things, “thou knowest that I love thee;”—I say, such a character has no business to investigate this subject: his first concern is to cry with the Publican, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

“ner.”—And for this reason his hopes are interested. No one, therefore, I repeat, but who possess a childlike disposition, and is in the habit of taking up his cross, and following his despised Master, can be a judge of the controversy.—These are willing to adopt the language of the Psalmist, and that of an inspired Apostle—“Clouds and darknes surround thy throne”—“We know but in part—we prophecy but in part;”—and with our Lord himself—“Not my will, but thine be done.”

Should any unenlightened mind see this Letter, and have patience to read it out, I know its destiny—“It is a hard saying, who can bear it;”—“who can follow a religion whose maxims are so rigid—whose threatenings are so dreadful?”—But I retract—Perhaps the blessed Spirit may press home the truths herein contained, and lead the Reader to adore him, “whose ways are in the whirlwind—past finding out.”—These are the sincere wishes of,

Dear SIR,

Your friend and servant,

J. HOLLOWAY.

Nov. 9, 1789.

No. 8, WITTAM'S BUILDINGS,
OLD STREET ROAD, HOXTON.

